

SUBJECT: Direct Services Enhancement Project

BRANCH: Office of Prevention and Victims Services

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) guidelines were revised in 1996 that allowed for corrections and juvenile justice agencies such as the California Youth Authority (CYA), to apply for funds for victims services programs.

In 1997, the Office of Prevention and Victims Services (OPVS) submitted a proposal to the Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) to apply for the use of VOCA funds to implement the Direct Services Enhancement Project (DSEP). OPVS was awarded the grant from OCJP to implement the DSEP in calendar year 1998 and has received a commitment from OCJP for ongoing funding.

The DSEP provides direct services to victims of serious and violent youthful offenders committed to the CYA prior to 1997. These cases are referred to as “Lost, But Not Forgotten”. The services provided include: notifying victims of the whereabouts of offenders and the circumstances of the case; counseling and education regarding victims rights to notification and restitution; and assistance in preparing victim impact statements for presentation to the Youthful Offender Parole Board (YOPB).

The VOCA grant provides funds to OPVS for the following services:

- Funding for one Parole Agent II, one Staff Services Analyst and one Office Technician.
- Provides services to the deaf and hearing impaired through an interpreter, as well as, use of a TTY Line.
- Provides translation services to crime victims in over 150 languages.
- Emergency travel funds for victims to participate in YOPB hearings.
- Staff resources to accompany victims to YOPB hearings.
- Translation and printing of CYA-related victim assistance materials into Spanish, Laotian, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Tagalog.
- The development of a training video for county Victim/Witness Assistance personnel and other victim service providers on victims’ rights in the CYA.
- Outreach materials.

Future goals of the DSEP:

- Ongoing additional outreach to departmental staff through advocacy, education and training.
- Provide direct services to victims who have been left out of the system.

Since the implementation of the DSEP program, staff have delivered counseling and referral services to over 5,000 crime victims, assisted over 150 victims in writing and preparing Victim Impact Statements for the YOPB, accompanied 205 victims to 90 YOPB hearings, reviewed 1,557 cases and attended 77 advocate group meetings. Staff have translated 317 personal letters or provided victim’s information from English to Spanish, 1 from English to Vietnamese and 1 from English to Hmong. DSEP staff provided victims services and Juvenile Justice training to 693 new advocates. The DSEP’s most significant achievement is the production of the “Helping Victims” video that has received recognition both at the state and national level.

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